



Schefflera arboricola Dwarf Schefflera¹

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INTRODUCTION

This evergreen shrub has attractive dark green, glossy, palmate leaves densely covering flexible, green stems which gently fan out into a rounded crown (Fig. 1). Plants are usually seen with multiple stems sprouting from the base. Branching can be encouraged by pinching the stems, which forms a denser shrub. It can be pruned into a small tree over a period of years where it would make an accent or patio tree. The tree remains a green mass, not changing during the year, except when it displays the brilliant orange-yellow fruit in the winter.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Schefflera arboricola*

Pronunciation: shef-LEER-uh ar-bor-ih-KOLE-uh

Common name(s): Dwarf Schefflera

Family: *Araliaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; espalier; hedge; suitable for growing indoors; near a deck or patio; trainable as a standard; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 10 to 15 feet

Spread: 6 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more

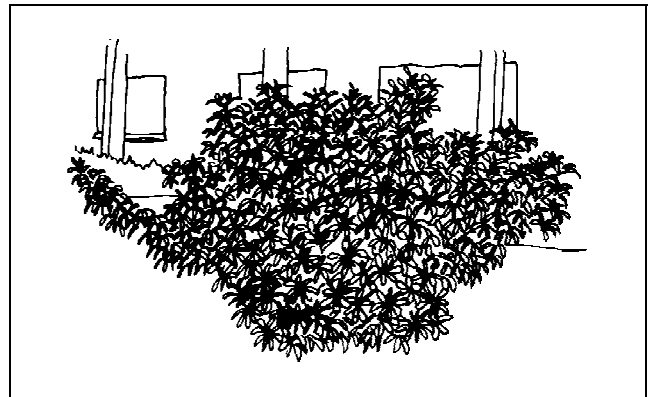


Figure 1. Young Dwarf Schefflera.

or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: round; vase shape

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: palmately compound

Leaflet margin: entire

Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); obovate

Leaflet venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaflet blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Flower

Flower color: green

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: orange

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

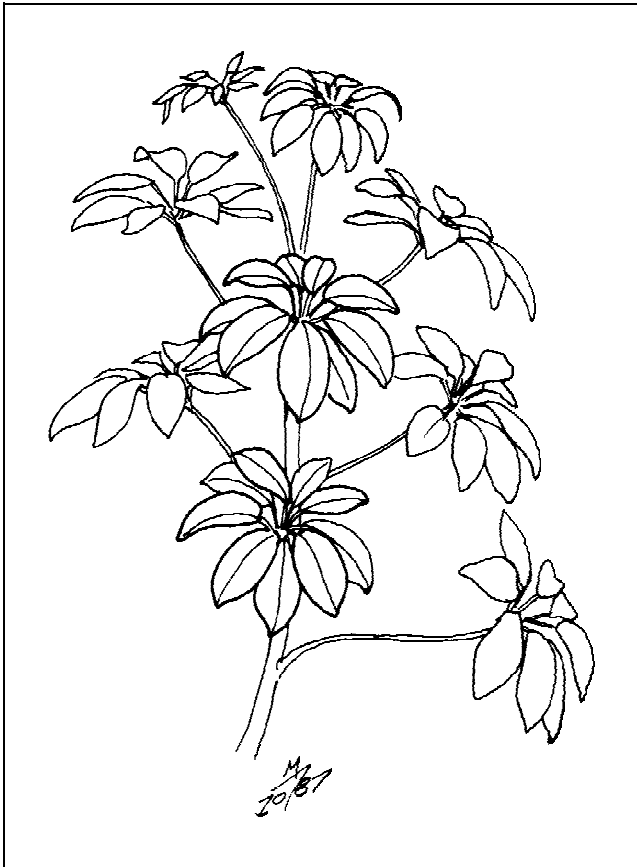


Figure 3. Foliage of Dwarf Schefflera.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

A popular house plant, Dwarf Schefflera performs well in a variety of outdoor settings. It can be used as a hedge, specimen planting, poolside container plant, and even trains well into an espalier on the wall of a building. Aerial roots originate from the lower portions of the trunks and branches, and root into the ground.

Dwarf Schefflera is adaptable to sun, part sun or deep shade and does best on light, sandy, well-drained soils. The plant prefers soil which is kept on the dry side. One of the best hedges for shady areas.

There is a cultivar available with variegated foliage.

Propagation is by seed, cuttings, or air-layers.

Pests

Scale and spider mites may be a problem when Dwarf Schefflera is grown indoors but outdoors pest problems are rare. Occasionally scale may infest this tree.